

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. However, the company's order to its stations to air this inflammatory documentary (that has little, if any merit or basis in fact) is nothing more than egregious electioneering by a documented partisan group. This is not demonstrative of what the FCC demands, namely, that the use of the public airwaves serves the public interest.

When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away from our community, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why media ownership rules need to be significantly strengthened, not weakened. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

I urge you to go through a thorough investigation of Sinclair Broadcasting, and other such oligopolistic broadcast companies, and demand that fairness be instilled in their broadcasts or face severe financial and judicial penalties, including the forced dispersal or sale of holdings. Thank you for your attention.